

Juniata Shops, Erecting Shop
East of Fourth Avenue at Third Street
Altoona
Blair County
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-232-C

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

JUNIATA SHOPS, ERECTING SHOP

HAER No. PA-232-C

Location: East of Fourth Avenue at Third Street, Altoona, Blair County, Pennsylvania
USGS Quad: Altoona, Pennsylvania (1:24000)
UTM: 17 E.721650 N.4490000

Date of Construction: 1890, 1903

Builder: Pennsylvania Railroad

Present Owner: Conrail

Present Use: Manufacturing Railroad Rolling Stock

Significance: The Erecting Shop was one of the four original shop buildings constructed at Juniata.

Project Information: This project was undertaken by HAER in conjunction with America's Industrial Heritage Project as part of an architectural survey covering a nine-county region in Southwestern Pennsylvania, Randall Cooley, Director. See HAER No. PA-108, Pennsylvania Railroad, Altoona Works, Altoona, Blair County, Pennsylvania for further project information and documentation.

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History:

In the 1880s the extension of the PRR lines west of Pittsburgh brought a corresponding increase in traffic. The new demands for motive power led to the planning of the Juniata Shops, which the PRR slated for use as erecting and repair facilities for locomotives. Ground for the first buildings was broken on 15 September 1888 and the shops were completed in 1890. The shops produced its first locomotive on 27 July 1891. The Erecting Shop was one of the four original shop buildings constructed adjacent to a 261' x 60' hydraulic transfer table which originally extended the length and width of the yard. Originally 351' in length, by 1905 the building had been extended to 580'. Facilities included a 15-ton crane and two 65-ton cranes. Over 200 men, or about 12 percent of the Juniata work force, were employed in the shop in 1907.

Parts worked on individually in other areas of the complex were assembled in the Erecting Shop. Forgings and castings, which had come together in the center of the Machine Shop, passed from the machine shop to the erecting shop through facing side doors. There they were met by the boiler, which had come in through the west door from the Boiler Shop. In 1907 the annual capacity of the Juniata Shops was 275 locomotives.

In 1925 with the completion of the new Erecting and Machine Shop (today, the "E&M Shop,"), the old Erecting Shop was converted to a Tank Repair Shop. In 1945 recalling the changes that had taken place to the building, Works Manager, Fred G. Grimshaw, wrote in his history of the Altoona Works: "The old erecting shop ... became progressively a tank shop, a shop for building new freight cars on the process basis, a process shop for building new locomotive tenders, an electric locomotive cab construction shop, and finally, within the last two years, a welding shop. In this shop are concentrated much of the welding operations which have grown so rapidly during the past few years." Today it still houses Conrail's welding operations.

Sources:

"The Altoona Shops of the Pennsylvania Railroad," American Engineer and Railroad Journal 70 (6 parts, June-December 1896), pp. 89-93, 165-169, 203-206, 241-245, 279-284, 317-320.

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Flanders, Ralph E. "Erection Practice in the Juniata Shops," Machinery (Railway Edition) 9 (June 1910), pp. 785-793.